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**LOGISTIC REQUIREMENTS AND CAPABILITIES  
OF COMMUNIST CHINA TO CONDUCT MILITARY CAMPAIGNS  
AGAINST INDIA**

**18 November 1962**

**Office of Research and Reports**

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FOREWORD

This paper presents tentative estimates of the supply requirement for the forces of Communist China in combat units currently engaged in the Sino-Indian conflict along the Tibet border. The paper also considers the part of the capability of the road transportation routes in the area currently in use, the size of forces that can be supported by the current capability of roads, and the speed with which additional forces can be deployed for combat against India. In addition, it provides a tentative estimate of the ability of Communist China to supply forces in Tibet by an airlift.

These estimates are based on the best information available to this Office from all sources on 18 November 1962. Work also is currently underway on this problem by the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army; by the Defense Intelligence Agency; and by the Rand Corporation under contract with the Department of Defense. The definitive conclusions of the studies of these other organizations will not be available for some time.

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1. Supply of Troops in Tibet

At present, about 100,000 troops are currently estimated to be in the Tibet Military Region, and 24,000 of these are believed to be in the combat areas. The troops in the Region would require about 445 tons\* of supplies daily, including 270 tons delivered to the combat areas and the area north of Sikkim. \*\*

If maximum use were made of present Tibetan road capability, 1,440 tons of supplies could be delivered daily to troops in front-line combat units out of a potential total of 2,000 tons deliverable daily by road to Tibet. The 1,440 tons of supplies could sustain about 170,000 troops in the front-line combat units, leaving 560 tons of supplies daily for use of troops and civilians not in the front-line areas.

The present roads could support the daily resupply requirements of seven times the number of troops now in the front-line combat units, and five times as many supplies could be brought in compared with those now required by the troops located in the whole of Tibet. On the average, all roads in Tibet are being used to only slightly more than 20 percent of their maximum capability, as shown in the tabulation on the following page.

2. Redeployment of Combat Troops to Tibet

The Chinese Communists could provide the resupply requirements for 300,000 troops in the Tibet Military Region. We estimate that the Tibet internal road net and feeder lines would permit the deployment of

\* Tonnages are given in short tons throughout this paper.

\*\* For a description of the road system of Tibet, see the Appendix and the map, Figure 1.

	Tons per Day		
	Present Resupply Requirements <sup>a/</sup>	Maximum Use of Present Road Capability	Percent of Capability in Use
Combat areas	270 <sup>b/</sup>	1,440	18.8
Noncombat areas	175	560	31.3
Total Tibet Military Region	445	2,000	22.3

a. See the map, Figure 2.

b. Including supplies delivered to the area north of Sikkim.

about 170,000 troops to the border areas of Ladakh, the Northeastern Frontier Agency (NEFA), and Yatung, north of Sikkim.\* The remaining 130,000 Chinese forces would be used to resupply forward units, to provide for internal security, and to maintain internal lines of communications.

Theoretically, 170,000 combat troops could be positioned in the border areas in as little as 6 weeks, but the buildup of rear area strength would come much later. The buildup of combat troops could be accomplished by repositioning troops already in Tibet but not actually fighting and by moving seven additional divisions into Tibet. Five of these seven divisions probably would be brought in via the railheads north of the Tibet Military Region from as far as the Peiping and Wu-han Military Regions.

In order to move seven new infantry divisions to the border area in 6 weeks, the Chinese Communists would have to operate their motor transport units and organic motor transport at a greatly accelerated pace.\*\*

\* See the map, Figure 3.

\*\* If troops were to be moved at the normal rate used for resupply movements, it would take, for example, as long as 18 days to move one division from the railhead at Hsiatung to Lhasa and 30 days to Bum La, a total distance of some 1,600 miles.

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Operating on a "crash basis," they could, for limited periods of 2 to 5 days, provide a capacity three to five times the normal sustained capacity of the main roads into and within the Tibet Military Region.

It is unlikely, however, that the buildup could be accomplished so rapidly, owing to the deterioration of roads, the difficult terrain, the high altitudes, adverse weather, and the problem of gasoline supply for the substantial number of trucks involved in the crash operation. It would be reasonable to expect a more moderate buildup extending over a period of several months. A more moderate tempo in the buildup would provide ample time for necessary road maintenance and stockpiling of gasoline along the supply routes, would lessen the urgency of eliminating adverse conditions caused by weather, and would compensate for possible errors in the organization of so vast a movement in this area over such a relatively short period of time.

Computing on the basis of accepted logistic factors, the time required for the redeployment of the seven additional divisions in specific geographic areas, however, would be as follows:

a. Two weeks probably is about the shortest time that a division now located outside of the Tibet Military Region could move into Tibet and to a fighting front. The shortest route is from Ch'eng-tu to Li-ma via Ch'ang-tu.

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c. In the Ladakh area the roads to the front would support four divisions in addition to the nearly two divisions already there. Because of the relative route capacities, it is likely that one division only would move from the east via Urumchi and three divisions via Lhasa. All four divisions could be in the Ladakh area within about 6 weeks, the longest period of time required for the deployment of combat forces to Tibet.

### 3. Potential Airlift Capabilities

It is estimated that the Chinese Communists are currently moving only a few military supplies to Tibet by air transport. The potential airlift capability of the Chinese civil-military transport fleet to carry supplies from the airfields at the railroad-served distribution centers of Lan-chou, Ch'eng-tu, and Hsi-ning to Lhasa, however, is estimated to be about 240 tons per day. This daily rate can be maintained for a period of approximately 1 month, after which the daily rate would be cut at least in half over a sustained period.

The airlift capability, therefore, is not sufficient to augment rapidly the troop strength in Tibet, but the tonnage moved by air would augment supplies transported by truck to Lhasa for the resupply of combat and garrison troops under present conditions. Such augmentation would be equivalent in magnitude to the support required for 28,000 troops in combat for 1 month and about half that number thereafter. Because the road capacity south of Lhasa is less than that of the roads northward to the railheads, airlifted supplies would have to substitute for, rather than augment, supplies moving to the border areas where troops are in combat and also to troops located elsewhere in Tibet.

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APPENDIXTHE ROAD SYSTEM OF TIBETA. Main Access Roads to and Within Tibet1. Tsinghai-Tibet Highway

This highway starts at the railroad in northern China at Hung-liu-yuan, or Hsia-tung, and is the major supply route for troops in Tibet. It goes south through An-hsi, Ta-ch'ai-tan, Golmo, An-to, Nagchhu Dzong, and Yang-pa-ching, to Lhasa. The length of this highway is estimated to be about 1,300 miles. An alternate route is available from the railhead at Hsi-ning in north-central China, then west to Golmo and thereafter south to Lhasa as stated above. The alternate route from Hsi-ning to Lhasa is about 70 miles longer, or an estimated total of 1,370 miles.

2. Szechwan-Tibet Highway

The Szechwan-Tibet Highway starts at the railhead at Ch'eng-tu in Szechwan Province and runs generally west through K'ang-ting, Kan-tzu, Te-ko, Ch'ang-tu (Chamdo), Pang-ta, and west to Sung-tsung and Lhasa, approximately 1,210 miles.

3. Urumchi-Kashgar-Rudog Highway

This highway originates in northwestern China at the railhead in the Urumchi area. From Urumchi it goes south to Karashahr and then west to Kucha, A'ko-su, and Kashgar. It then turns southeast to Yarkand, Karghalik, and Rudog. The estimated length of the road from Urumchi to Rudog is about 1,335 miles. The southern section of this route from Karghalik to Rudog is often referred to as the Sinkiang-Tibet Highway.

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#### 4. Trans-Tibet Highway

This highway connects the Sinkiang-Tibet Highway with the Tsinghai-Tibet Highway and has terminal roads at two places on each of these highways. On the Sinkiang Highway the terminal is at Tashigong and at a point about 30 miles north of Rudog. From these two locations the roads intersect about 130 miles to the east, forming one road which travels east approximately 475 miles. Near Seling Tsho it divides, with one road going 110 miles north to An-to and one going south 180 miles to Nagchhu Dzong, both on the Tsinghai-Tibet Highway. The estimated total distance over the Trans-Tibet Highway, therefore, is between 715 and 785 miles.

#### 5. Lhasa-Gartok Highway

This highway roughly parallels the southern border of Tibet, starting at Lhasa and thence to Zhikatsé, Lhatse Dzong, Sangsang, Saka, Tradum, Nakchak, Barkha, and Gartok. This distance is estimated to be approximately 765 miles. However, the road continues 150 more miles through Gar Dzong, to meet the Trans-Tibet Highway at Tashigong and the Sinkiang Highway at Rudog, a total distance from Lhasa to Rudog of about 915 miles.

#### B. Roads from Access Highways to the Borders of Tibet

##### 1. Ladakh Area

The roads in the Ladakh area all originate from the main Sinkiang-Tibet Highway.

##### a. Chip Chap Valley Road

This road starts about 10 miles north of Haji Langar and follows the Qara Qash River to Qizil Jilga and then goes west to the Chip Chap River valley. The total distance is approximately 110 miles.

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b. Road to Nischu

This road is the same as the Chip Chap Valley road (as above) to Qizil Jilga but then goes south through Dabra La and west and south to Nischu, a total distance of about 155 miles.

c. Road to Ningri

This road leaves the Sinkiang-Tibet Highway and goes west through Lanak La to Ningri, a distance of almost 60 miles.

d. Rudog to Chusul

This road runs west from Rudog to Chusul, about 55 miles.

2. NEFA Area

a. Lhasa-Bum La Road

Starting at Lhasa, this road travels south to Chhushu, east to Tsethang, and south again to Lhuntse Dzong, Tsona Dzong, and Bum La. The estimated distance is 280 miles.

b. Ch'ang-Tu - Li-ma (Ri-ma) Road

This road goes south from Ch'ang-Tu to Pang-ta and then west and south to Sang-ang-ch'u, and Li-ma, a total distance of approximately 280 miles.

3. Central Tibet

a. Lhasa-Sikkim Road

From Lhasa this road goes southwest to Nangkartse Dzong, west to Gyantse and south to Khangmar, Phari Dzong, and Yatung. The distance is estimated at 230 miles.

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b. Barkha-Taklakh

This road runs from Barkha on the Lhasa-Gartok Highway to Taklakh near the northwestern corner of Nepal, about 50 miles.

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